Good Neighbor

The purpose of the Good Neighbor Section of the CLPP is to help the producer identify strengths and areas for improvement in community relations. One-on-one communication and education is vital to the growth and future of livestock production in Indiana.

The Good Neighbor Section contains the following:

- Helpful hints for building good neighbor relations
- A self-assessment

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Good Neighbor

The livestock industry has changed dramatically over the past 25 years. Modern production systems allow farmers to increase the number of animals they raise at a lower cost while adhering to the highest environmental standards. At the same time, most Hoosier's remember the farms of their grandfathers' days and are concerned about changes. Yet the values and principles of family farming have been passed down through the generations and the vast majority of today's modern farms are run by the children and grandchildren of the same farm families.[*]

Communication with neighbors is critical for positive community relations. The business of agriculture involves noise, dust, odor, slow moving vehicles and late nights in the fields. The livestock and poultry farms of today are dedicated to providing a safe quality product for consumers, protecting and preserving the environment for the next generation and being good neighbors in the community.

The best way to communicate the agriculture story is one-on-one with your neighbors. This provides an opportunity to share your business practices and your responsible actions in being a good steward of the land, water, air and animals. If a conflict occurs in the future, it is beneficial to have a solid relationship built on mutual trust.

Building trust starts with openly sharing information. Respect your neighbor's quality of life and reach out to them in a friendly manner. Communicate with them in planning for the manure application process and work with them on days, time of the day and related situations that may impact their family activities. Invest some of your time to help inform your neighbors and community and answer questions about your farming practices. Building positive relations will pay big dividends in the future.

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[*] *From A Closer Look at Indiana's Livestock Industry June, 2007 Indiana State Department of Agriculture*

How to Build Relationships

1. **Talk to your neighbors**. Set time aside in your busy schedule to meet with your neighbors and introduce yourself and your family. Use available educational materials, including "Moving to the Country" from Farm Bureau, "Taking Stock in Indiana's Future" from the Indiana Soybean Alliance or "Indiana's Livestock Industry: A Closer Look" by the Indiana State Department of Agriculture.

   Helpful Hints

   a. Have a list of surrounding neighbors and their contact address and phone numbers in an easily accessible location - this will save time when there is a reason to contact them.
   b. Stay in contact with neighbors on a quarterly basis to answer any questions or concerns. Regular communication brings to light problems that you may not have realized.

2. **Plan a neighborhood picnic, hog roast or ice cream social**. The neighborhood kids would love to see the farm animals up close. This will give you an opportunity to have fun and inform the neighbors and give them a tour of your facilities. A presentation or pictures of the inside of your facilities will be helpful. Explain the many checks and balances, paperwork and regulations you must adhere to on a daily basis.

   Helpful Hints

   a. Set aside a small parcel of land and raise sweet corn, tomatoes or pumpkins to give to your neighbors. Gestures of friendship will go a long way in developing good relationships.
   b. Template PowerPoint presentations from the Indiana Soybean Alliance and Indiana Farm Bureau are available for livestock producers to develop presentations for their neighbors.
   c. Contact Indiana Farm Bureau, Inc., Indiana Soybean Alliance or Indiana Pork Producers and ask about becoming involved with their Building Strong Communities program.

3. **Offer to help with home maintenance.** Clean the snow off of your neighbors' driveways. Clear the roads for them. Offer to disc your neighbor's garden with the tractor.
4. **First impressions are lasting**. Spend the time and finances to keep your facility looking nice. Mow and pick up trash along the roadside, mow around the buildings, plant some flowers or shrubs, use trees as windbreaks and fencing and keep the buildings looking clean and neat.
5. **Offer to plan ahead.** Notify your neighbors ahead of time with the possible future days of manure application. Ask them if this will interfere with any of their outdoor activities. Take into consideration time of day and wind direction. Select management procedures of incorporation or injection.

   Helpful Hint

   a. Call or drop a postcard in the mail to your neighbors explaining it is that time of year for manure application and ask them to notify you of any upcoming events.

6. **Location, location, location:** If your operation is making plans to grow, expand or move to a new location, be proactive at the beginning. When selecting a site

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and making decisions on the orientation of buildings, factors to be considered include odor dispersion and location of nearby residences.

Helpful Hint

a. A good recommendation from your current neighbors on past performance will be extremely helpful when planning to expand in a current or new area.

7. **Support the local community.** Get involved in off-the-farm, non-agriculture related community activities. This will help you to share the story of agriculture with people in the community. Consider volunteering for a youth program, joining a service club or an economic development organization.

   Helpful Hint

   a. Attend a local zoning board meeting and get to know your local appointed and elected officials, county government staff and major business owners. Invite them to your farm. Consider running for elected office at the local or state level.

8. **Open a dialogue to avoid conflict.** The proactive approach of the previous "helpful hints" will lead to less conflict. If conflict occurs, be truthful and respectful of other people's positions. Listen carefully to what the other person is saying, and what he is not saying in his feelings and emotions. Restate his position to have a clear understanding of the issue then work together to resolve. Agree upon a solution and take action. Some situations may require a third party mediator.

   Helpful Hint

   a. Be truthful and honest, accept responsibility for any mistakes and work toward an agreeable solution for all people involved.

Summary

Good neighbor relations begin with you. The time commitment to building these relationships may be your greatest investment in your operation. Change is constant and growth into agricultural areas will continue to be a challenge. Be proud of your profession and demonstrate this in the appearance and management of the farm. Become proactive off the farm by becoming involved in the community. Ask the question, "What am I doing today to make a positive difference in my community and neighborhood?"

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References

Filipic, Martha and Sharp, Kyle. “Building a Bank Account of Goodwill – Trust, Long-standing Relationships Can Be Key in Resolving Agriculture/Community Conflicts,” *Ohio State Agriculture*, Summer 1999.

James, Barbara H. “Rural Neighbors: Living and Working Together,” Ohio State University Extension Fact Sheet (CDFS-1280-99).

“Community Relations Module,” National Pork Producers Council, Environmental Assurance Program.

“Finding Common Ground - Good Neighbor Relations Advice and Tips from Farmers,” Pennsylvania State University.

“Generally Accepted Agricultural and Management Practices for Site Selection and Odor Control for New and Expanding Livestock Production Facilities,” Michigan Department of Agriculture, June 2006.

“Good Neighbor Policy,” Recommendations from the Ohio Livestock Industry Task Force Report, 1996.

Ohio Livestock Environmental Assurance Program Level 2
Ohio Livestock Coalition
P.O. Box 182383
Columbus, OH 43218-2383

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Producer Resources

Indiana Farm Bureau www.infarmbureau.org
GINA www.growinginagriculture.com
Indiana Pork Producers www.indianapork.com

Purdue University CAFO site, www.ces.purdue.edu/cafos
General Information

- Role of the Extension Educator on the Plan Commission
- Roles of the Different Regulatory Agencies
- Roles of Elective Officials
- Planning and Zoning

Social/Economic Issues

- The Economic Impact of the Indiana Livestock Industries
- Impact on Local Communities
- Managing Conflict

Purdue University Publications web site, www.ces.purdue.edu/extmedia/ageng.htm

- Best Environmental Management Practices, Farm Animal Production: Building Good Neighbor Relationships

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GOOD NEIGHBOR
SELF ASSESSMENT

Directions: This is a SELF assessment for your use to help identify the strengths and areas for improvement on your operation. Please place the total score on the Validation Form.		
Question	Points	Yes answer score points
Do you know your property line neighbors?	10	
Have you communicated with your residence neighbors within a one mile radius? (in person, phone or by mail)	10	
Do you apply manure in a manner to keep odor reduced?	10	
Do you communicate with your neighbors before manure application? (those that would be affected)	10	
Do you adjust your application time to avoid conflict with neighbors planned outdoor activities?	10	
Do you use common sense in application and consider wind direction and weather conditions?	10	
Do you keep manure leakage off the roads?	10	
Do you clean up any mud that is left on the roadways?	10	
Must score minimum of 50 points		
Do you keep the grass mowed around buildings?	10	
Do you mow roadsides?	10	
Do you have landscaping with trees, shrubs and flowers around the production facilities?	10	
Do you have trees planted as windbreaks around the buildings?	10	
Are your buildings kept clean, painted and in good repair?	10	
Do you use additional measures to help reduce odor? (i.e. feed additives, trees, biofilters, berms, etc.)	20	
Must score minimum of 30 points		
Do you have a rodent control program?	10	
Do you have a fly reduction program? (for facilities and/or for livestock)	10	
Do you employ neighborhood youth to assist with farm labor needs?	10	
Do you express a gesture of friendship to your neighbors? (i.e. fresh produce, farm products, plow snow, farm tour, neighbor picnic, etc.)	10	
Are you a visible part of the community? (i.e. Kiwanis, Rotary, Lions, Jaycees, Church/Faith Based Initiative, Youth 4-H or FFA etc.)	10	
Have you been an educational speaker about livestock production to a non-ag group? (i.e. chamber of commerce, town meeting, school, professional organization, etc.)	10	
Are you a local official?	10	
Are you involved in other non-ag related community activities? (i.e. athletics, event sponsorship, volunteer programs, etc.)	10	
Must score minimum of 20 points		
Total Score		

GOOD NEIGHBOR
SELF ASSESSMENT

Validation Form: Good Neighbor

Name _____

Please check the box of completed activities:

□ Read Good Neighbor Section

□ Self Assessment score _____

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Myths and Facts

Regulation: Is Anyone In Charge?

Myth: Today's farmers don't care about the environment.

Fact: Both from a business and an ethical standpoint, farmers have every motivation to conserve and protect the natural resources they rely upon. Farmers understand that clean air, land and water are crucial to the long-term success of the state's industry.

Modern farmers' use no-till and conservation tillage practices to protect the soil, as well as precise application of fertilizers based on soil type, production capacity and crop to be produced. They also use buffers and filter strips to protect the surrounding surface water. These techniques better protect the environment than what many Hoosiers envision as traditional farms.

It is interesting to note that "grandpa's farm" was not regulated before 1971. On farms with old technology and animals grazing out on the land, the manure was much more likely to run off into our lakes, rivers and streams.

Large livestock farms (CAFOs and CFOs) are held to a higher water quality standard as compared to manufacturing or waste treatment facilities; they can discharge nothing. Currently, approximately 26 percent of beef cattle, 45 percent of dairy animals, and 94 percent of all hogs in Indiana are on regulated farms. In 2006, only 11 of 2,250 large livestock operations faced formal enforcement action as a result of a discharge. At the same time, it is estimated that 15.3 billion gallons of raw sewage was discharged into the environment from septic systems alone. Clearly, the bigger sources of concern for our environment do not lie with our farmers where the vast majorities are sound stewards of their land and water.

Myth: Livestock farms are not regulated like factories and produce huge amounts of waste that pollute our water.

Fact: Today Hoosier livestock farms are held to the highest environmental standards; they are required to have zero discharge into state waters. This means that on large farms, all manure is required to be contained in approved engineered storage structures and when application takes place, the manure is only at a rate that can be used by growing crops.

The Indiana livestock industry is highly regulated by four government agencies:

- Indiana Department of Environmental Management (IDEM)
- U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA)
- Office of the Indiana State Chemist (OISC)
- Indiana Board of Animal Health (BOAH)

IDEM has been regulating CFOs or CAFOs since 1971, and was one of the first states to do so. The IDEM CFO/CAFO approval/permit program is based on the Confined Feeding Control Law administered through regulations adopted under the Water

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Pollution Control Board. The focus of the regulations is to protect water quality. The process is designed to make certain that waste storage facilities are designed, constructed and maintained to be structurally sound and that manure is handled and applied in an environmentally responsible manner.

IDEM also requires all livestock farms to submit an accurate and detailed annual report each year that includes how much manure was generated and where it was applied or distributed.

The **EPA** was established in 1970 and consolidated into one agency a variety of federal research, monitoring, standard-setting and enforcement activities. The mission of the EPA is to protect human health and the environment.

In 2003, federal regulations for Concentrated Animal Feeding Operations (CFOs) were revised. Under the Clean Water Act, the National Pollutant Discharge Elimination System Program (NPDES) was created to protect and improve water quality by regulating point source dischargers. CAFOs are point sources, as defined by the Clean Water Act.

The EPA also has preset minimum regulations that go into CFO permits called “effluent limitations guidelines” (ELGs). The ELGs consist of required management and recordkeeping practices as well as limits on any pollutants. States often set additional requirements that work in tandem with the ELGs to protect water quality.

The OISC was created in 1881 by the General Assembly to regulate the sale and distribution of fertilizer in the state.

Because manure is an organic fertilizer, OISC has authority over its application. OISC is currently developing a certification program for individuals who broker, transport or apply fertilizer material in Indiana. The certification program is tentatively expected to be in place by the end of 2008.

The **BOAH** was established more than 100 years ago and provides an important link in Indiana's food chain. Every day, BOAH inspectors scrutinize the cleanliness and handling of meat and poultry products in state-certified processing plants. The adoption of new, safer food-handling methods (known as HACCP) gives BOAH inspectors even more opportunity to identify any existing food borne contaminates before the meat reaches the consumer. Meat and poultry products meeting Indiana's standards of inspection bear the Indiana legend mark.

Source: A Closer Look at Indiana’s Livestock Industry, Indiana State Department of Agriculture, Summer 2007

Environmental Concerns: Solutions in Air and Water Quality

Myth: Livestock farms stink and they can’t do anything about it.

Fact: Farmers can and do minimize odor by implementing odor abatement technologies

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such as:

- Shelterbelts (planting trees)
- Incorporating manure in land application
- Diet formulation (use feeds that reduce odor and nutrient excretion)
- Reducing manure loading rates for lagoons (solids separation)
- Manure additives
- Other strategies approved by the Purdue Agricultural Air Quality Laboratory (PAAQL)

Myth: Livestock manure is considered toxic waste. When farmers spread manure on the fields for fertilizer, it goes into our water supply.

Fact: Livestock manure is an important fertilizer. When applied on a field according to federal and state regulations from EPA and IDEM, animal waste is a very economic fertilizer for the farmer and recycles nutrients back onto the land to replace the nutrients lost from growing crops, increase soil productivity and add resistance to drought.
It is true a few unprogressive farmers have not been thorough in their practices. However, the vast majority of farmers implement very safe technological practices to ensure that they cause no land or water pollution or other environmental problems for the community.

Most farmers have an agronomist (an expert in the science of soil management and crop production) analyze the fields to determine what nutrients the crops need. A nutrient management plan is developed, which determines when, where and how much of the manure is to be applied. All amounts are based on agronomic (soil management) rates. When applied, many farmers then use a mechanism to literally inject the manure 3 – 4 inches into the soil. Because of the precise calculations, there is no danger of it seeping down into ground water or of excess runoff into surface water.

Smaller operations can also use Manure Management Planner, a computer program developed at Purdue University that creates manure management plans for crop and animal feeding operations. The farmer enters information about the operation and the program helps allocate manure (where, when and how much) on a monthly basis for the length of the plan (1-10 years). This helps determine if the current operation has sufficient crop acreage, seasonal land availability, manure storage capacity and application equipment to manage the manure in an environmentally responsible manner.
Source: A Closer Look at Indiana's Livestock Industry, Indiana State Department of Agriculture, Summer 2007

Animal Welfare

Myth: Confined livestock feeding operations are bad for the animals' wellbeing.

Fact: If livestock are stressed in their environment, they start to show it with loss of appetite, weight loss and susceptibility to illness. Maintaining an animal's well-being is not only beneficial from an ethical standpoint, but also from an economic view. Conditions for animals that were common on farms decades ago could be quite harsh. Often animals were exposed to extreme weather conditions often with minimal shelter.

The farmer works hard to keep his animals healthy in order to provide for his family. According to the 2006 *Hog Breeding Herd Structure* report from the National Agricultural Statistics Service, farmers using modern livestock practices are able to save more pigs per litter now than during any time in the last fifteen years.

Livestock producers are individuals who enter the field because they want to work with animals. Many have been around livestock their entire lives and are experts in animal care. They want to provide good care to their animals from both a moral and financial point of view.

Myth: Farm animals are routinely raised on "factory farms," confined in "crowded, unventilated cages and sheds."

Fact: Animals are generally kept in barns and similar housing, with the exception of beef cattle, to protect the health and welfare of the animal. Housing protects animals from predators, disease, and bad weather or extreme climate. Housing also makes breeding and birth less stressful, protects young animals and makes it easier for farmers to care for both healthy and sick animals. Modern housing is well ventilated, warm, well-lighted, clean and scientifically designed for the specific needs of the animal, such as the regular availability of fresh water and a nutritionally balanced diet. For instance, a hog barn wouldn't be used for cows, any more than an adult would sleep in a child's crib. Housing is designed to allow the farmer to provide the best animal care.

Myth: **A vegetarian diet is healthier than a diet that includes meat, milk and eggs.**

Fact: Both the federal government and the American Heart Association contend that a diet containing meat, milk and eggs follows their dietary guidelines. Health benefits can be derived by non-vegetarians who follow a prudent diet that is low in fat, sodium, sugar and alcohol. Just as there are non-vegetarian diets that are unhealthy, so are there poorly planned vegetarian diets. The key to a healthy diet is moderation. One tip from Amy Barr, a registered dietitian in Boulder, Colorado, is "don't eliminate whole food groups. Don't, for example, drop dairy from your diet." "A lot of people, especially women, give up milk because they think it's fattening," says Anne Fletcher, a registered dietitian and author of Thin for Life. But milk is one of the best sources of calcium in the diet, "which is important for preventing osteoporosis and possibly for warding off colon cancer."

Myth: Farm animals in "confinement" are prone to disease, forcing farmers to routinely use antibiotics, hormones and drugs to keep them alive. This jeopardizes animal and human health.

Fact: Animal scientists, veterinarians and on-farm experience show animals kept in housing are no more likely to get sick than animals kept in the open. In fact, they're generally healthier because they are protected. However, farm animals do sometimes get sick. To prevent illness and to ensure that an animal remains healthy all of its life, farmers will take preventive measures, including the use of animal health products. These products are generally given to the animal in a scientifically formulated feed best suited to the animal's needs. This is the simplest way to ensure each animal gets the care it needs. Animal health products include animal drugs and vaccines, in addition to vitamins,

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minerals and other nutrients the animal needs in a balanced diet. All animal health products are approved and regulated by the U.S. Food & Drug Administration (FDA) prior to being given to animals.

Myth: By eating less meat, Americans would improve the environment and free land and resources for the production of food crops rather than animal products that could be used to feed the hungry overseas.

Fact: The optimal use of natural resources involves use of both animals and plants to produce the nutrients that humans require. For example, about half the land area of the United States is strictly grazing land – not suitable for crop production. That land would be of no use as a food resource if it were not for ruminant (four-stomach), grazing livestock. The United States has more than enough cropland to grow both feed grains and food crops.

Myth: Farm animals deserve the same rights as we do. All creatures deserve to share the planet equally with man.

Fact: This is a belief held by some vegetarians and animal rights extremists, and is not accepted by the general population. There are theological, scientific and philosophical arguments for why man cares for animals so they may serve him. Certainly, man has the moral obligation to avoid cruelty in dealing with all animals in all situations.

Myth: Farmers care less for their animals than they do for the money animals bring them. Agribusiness corporations mislead farmers into using production systems and drugs that mean profits at the cost of animal welfare.

Fact: Farmers and ranchers are neither cruel nor naive. One of the main reasons someone goes into farming or ranching is a desire to work with animals. A farmer would compromise his or her own welfare if animals were mistreated. Agriculture is very competitive in the United States. It's a career that pays the farmer a slim profit on the animals he cares for. Farmers are always looking for ways to improve their farms to ensure animal welfare and the economics of production. It is in the farmer's own best interest to see the animals in his charge treated humanely, guaranteeing him a healthy, high-quality animal, a greater return on his investment and a wholesome food product. No advertising campaign or salesman can convince a farmer to use a system or product that would harm an animal.

Myth: Farming in the United States is controlled by large corporations that care about profits and not about animal welfare.

Fact: Of the 2.2 million farms in the United States, 87 percent are owned by an individual or a married couple responsible for operating the farm. If partnerships – typically a parent and one or more children or other close relatives – are added to this total, 97 percent of U.S. farms are family-owned and operated, according to the U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA). Even those farms that are legally corporations are generally family controlled, with USDA reporting only 7,000 non-family-controlled corporate farms in the United States.

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Myth: Farm animals are routinely "mutilated" by beak trimming, tail docking, branding, dehorning, castration and other practices to make it easier for the farmer.

Fact: To the inexperienced viewer, some routine farm animal handling practices necessary to the welfare and health of the animal and the insurance of quality food may appear brutal, just as some lifesaving human surgical and medical practices may seem brutal to the casual observer. All of these practices are done in a professional manner to ensure the welfare of the animal.

Myth: Turkeys are fed growth hormones to artificially stimulate growth.

Fact: No commercially raised turkeys in the United States are ever given hormones of any kind. Although this practice may be sometimes used with other species, it is never employed with turkeys.

Myth: Egg producers put hormones in the hen feed.

Fact: Growth hormones are never fed to pullets being grown for egg-laying or during the egg-laying period. The hens have a high-quality, nutritionally balanced diet. The feed is meticulously formulated with the proper nutrients to produce quality eggs and is perfectly balanced with ingredients made up mostly of corn, soybean meal, vitamins and minerals.

Myth: Having so many hens in a closed facility will increase the risk of avian influenza.

Fact: Modern farming techniques help prevent the spread of avian influenza. Almost all eggs produced in the United States originate from farms with modern cage production systems in housing that protects the flock from contact with migratory birds, predators and other diseases. Few visitors are allowed in poultry houses to reduce the risk of spreading diseases. Modern cage systems allow for daily inspection and monitoring of hens for diseases, and for quick treatment. Most egg facilities have extensive bio-security programs that include cleaning and disinfecting of housing and equipment between flock cycles and all transport equipment for moving birds in and out of the houses; careful planning to keep flocks protected from other domestic and wild birds; fully developed and monitored immunization programs to keep flocks healthy; and complete training of all employees concerning bio-security procedures.

Myth: Cage-free and free-range hens are healthier and require little or no drugs or medicines.

Fact: Cage-free and free-range hens require continuous medicated feed for some diseases and often require more drugs than caged hens because of their constant exposure and contact with litter and waste on barn floors. Hens in cage systems seldom require drugs and only receive medicines or drugs for therapeutic reasons. In fact, hens kept in cage-free, organic or free-range systems have higher rates of mortality than those kept in cage production systems.

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Myth: Egg farmers starve their hens to make them lay more eggs.

Fact: Until recently the only known method to extend the life of a hen and rejuvenate its reproductive cycle was through the use of a feed-withdrawal molt. Through United Egg Producers-funded research, new methods have been found to induce a successful molt that does not eliminate feed. Based on these research findings, only molt programs that provide hens with nutritionally adequate feed suitable for a non-producing hen are allowed to use the UEP-certified seal.

Land Regulation/Zoning

Myth: Farmers just start a farm wherever they want without regard to other non-farming neighbors.

Fact: Farmers expand or establish livestock farms in rural locations near feed sources, near land used to recycle manure as soil nutrients and on land they already own. Most farmers use good management practices and are considerate of their non-farming neighbors. However, livestock farming does have some inherent odor and noise. Neighbors and farmers should communicate and work together to build trust and understanding.

In order to facilitate communications, and to give local communities better planning tools, the Indiana Land Resource Council and ISDA have developed three models. These models will assist counties seeking guidance on how to update their zoning ordinances to provide for strategic growth of agricultural production while minimizing conflicting land uses.

Sources: "A Closer Look at Indiana's Livestock Industry," Indiana State Department of Agriculture, Summer 2007.
"Animal Ag Myths," Soybean Checkoff, www.animalag.org.

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